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Winter blues
Terra Lightfoot performed at the Haliburton Legion on Feb. 13 as a part of the month-long February Folk Festival. For more musical coverage, see inside this edition. /Adam Frisk staff

Harcourt Timber Mart fire 'a huge loss' to community

EMILY STONEHOUSE
Editor

A devastating fire in Harcourt has left the community wondering about next steps.

Shortly before 5:30 p.m. on Feb. 12, the Highlands East Fire Department received a call for a structure fire at the Kingdon Timber Mart in Harcourt. While Harcourt is technically Dysart property, due to geographical proximity, the Highlands East team takes the lead on fire calls in the area. "We discovered a well-developed fire, coming from the attic area," confirmed Highlands East Fire Chief, Chris Baughman.

Baughman and his team quickly noted the size of the structure, and the contents inside the building, including paints, plumbing, and lumber. "It was like a house fire, times ten," he said. "If there was no action taken, it certainly would have spread to other buildings." Currently, the cause of the fire is unknown. "We know where it started," confirmed Baughman, "but we don't know what started it."

With 35 firefighters arriving on-site, all

see TIMBER MART page 11

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A snippet of some of the Black artists featured in the Great Hall at Haliburton School of Art and Design. The first three artists have direct ties to the local college. /EMILY STONEHOUSE staff

Charmaine Lurch has created and installed a number of wire-framed bees around the Haliburton Sculpture Forest. Her work was celebrated throughout Black History Month at Haliburton School of Art and Design. /FILE

Black History Month in the Haliburton Highlands

EMILY STONEHOUSE

Editor

Black History Month is recognized over the month of February, and has been across the country since 1995.

In 1978, the Ontario Black History Society (OBHS) was established. Its founders presented a petition to the City of Toronto to have February formally recognized as Black History Month, with the first proclamation put in place the following year.

Over the years, various provinces began adding celebrations during the month of February, with Rosemary Sadlier, president of the OBHS, introducing the idea of having Black History Month recognized across Canada in 1993. She made the proposal to the Honourable Jean Augustine, the first Black Canadian woman elected to Parliament.

By 1995, the House of Commons officially recognized February as Black History Month in Canada, following a motion introduced by Dr. Augustine. The House of Commons carried the motion unanimously, according to the Government of Canada website.

"During Black History Month, we honour and amplify the voices of Black Canadians while celebrating their many achievements and contributions," says the federal site. "The efforts of Black Canadians and their communities throughout history have greatly enriched Canada's cultural diversity, compassion and prosperity."

The site references Mathieu Da Costa, a navigator and interpreter, whose presence in Canada is first referenced in the early 1600s. "The role of Black people and their communities in Canada has largely been ignored as a key part of Canada's history," says the website. "There is little mention that some of the Loyalists who came here after the American Revolution and settled in the Maritimes were people of African descent, nor the fact that many soldiers of African descent made many sacrifices in wartime as far back as the War of 1812."

The federal agency also notes that few Canadians are aware of the brutal history of African people who were once enslaved throughout the geographical boundaries now known as Canada, "or of how those who fought enslavement helped to lay the foundation of Canada's diverse and inclusive society."

Right here in the Haliburton Highlands, a number of organizations are showcasing Black history to the community. The Haliburton County Library (HCPL) dedicated the entire month to highlight and elevate Black brilliance in film, media, and literacy.

"Celebrating Black History Month feels especially important in a rural community like ours, where people may not always have as many opportunities to encounter diverse stories and perspectives," said Shawna Gamblem, the programming and outreach coordinator for HCPL, "and where the library can help create space for learning, conversation, and shared understanding."

Gamblem shared that HCPL had organized a number of film screenings for all ages that incorporated Black history and contributions, as well as musical sessions and resources to showcase this important part of our national identity. "Most of our branches are also featuring Black History Month book displays for both children and adults," added Gamblem, "making it easy for visitors of all ages to discover powerful stories and voices throughout the month."

Haliburton School of Art and Design is another organization dedicated to amplifying diverse voices through their programming.

Erin Lynch, the operations and programming manager for the school, spent weeks leading up to February researching Black artists; particularly ones with ties to the Haliburton Highlands. "We wanted to do something around art," she said, "and as an arts school, that seemed like a natural fit."

After receiving permissions from the artists, Lynch assembled a display at the front entryway of the Great Hall at the Haliburton campus, featuring Black artists in a wide variety of mediums. Three featured artists, Aly McDonald, Charmaine Lurch, and Andy Akangah, all have direct ties to the school.

McDonald graduated from Fleming in 2019 with their visual and creative arts diploma, with a certificate in painting and drawing. She describes her work as "contemporary nude expressionism", and uses bold dashes, strokes, and colours to capture the energy of a piece. "Aly strives to express that even when a body is in a vulnerable state of nudity, every individual's body is their own. Nudity isn't inherently sexual," reads the display at the college.

Many would recognize the work of Charmaine Lurch from the Haliburton Sculpture Forest, which winds around Glebe Park. While she once attended the college herself, her wire bee sculptures currently dance around the Haliburton destination. "Working with a range of materials and reimagining our surroundings - from bees and taxi cabs to the *Tempest* and quiet moments of joy," reads her school bio, "Lurch subtly connects Black life and movement globally."

Andy Akangah is a Benin-Ghanaian-Canadian self-taught illustrator. As the founder and CEO of AKARTS Comics, a hip-hop inspired art feature, Akangah "merges the visual language of comic books, anime, and streetwear," says his bio, "exploring themes of identity, nostalgia, and Black cultural expression through bold, character-driven compositions." Akangah has taught and delivered presentations at Haliburton School of Art and Design in the past.

"We would like to expand our diversity in terms of course offerings and faculty," said Lynch, "because it's a reflection of what Canadian society is made of. This is a great opportunity to celebrate Black artists and designers."

While Black History Month is winding down for the year, resources and features will continue to be available at the local libraries, as well as Haliburton School of Art and Design.

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Family Day Fun

The annual Dorset Snowball Winter Festival was held over the Family Day weekend, with festivities falling on Valentine's Day. Despite cold weather, the yearly tradition saw hundreds of attendees, participating in a parade, wood carving, axe throwing, and a variety of wildlife experiences. Food, music, and entertainment made the event a sought-after destination over the winter weekend. /TIM YANO staff photographer

The Minden Hills Cultural Centre Foundation held their annual Family Fun Day over the Family Day weekend, with activities for kids, food provided by Minden Rotary, and plenty of arts and crafts for all ages, the event welcomed families from across the County. /TIM YANO staff photographer

In order to be entered into a raffle for prizes provided by the Municipality of Dysart et al, folks from across the County have submitted photos of their 'Fun in February', and all the experiences available in the Haliburton Highlands. /submitted

Fun in February brings 'hidden gems' to life

EMILY STONEHOUSE

Editor

While February may seem dreary for some, the Municipality of Dysart et al has launched a way to keep the winter blues at bay.

For the course of the month, locals and visitors alike are invited to partake in Fun in February, a municipally-lead initiative, encouraging opportunities to experience all winter has to offer.

"There are a variety of different activities people can take part in," said Andrea Mueller, the manager of programs and events for the municipality. "We are trying to showcase all the different opportunities in our community."

Now in its fourth year, Fun in February was developed to replace the annual Frost Festival, which was largely weather-dependent, and set for one single day mid-winter. "This isn't just for one day, now," said Mueller, "it takes part over the whole month, so it doesn't matter what the weather is like."

The idea behind the program is for folks to print out a passport, with over 30 activities suggested. While Mueller was mindful of encouraging outdoor activity, she was also cognizant of indoor participation as well. Some items include: complete a puzzle, bake something yummy, or visit a local gallery. Other activities focus on the winter component a bit more, such as following animal tracks, trying our skiing or skating, or taking a moonlit walk. "Chances are, you're already probably doing some of these activities," suggested Mueller.

For each activity completed, individuals and families can submit a photo to Mueller, notifying her of the completed task. For each entry, their names are added to a raffle for some desirable prizes, to be selected at the end of the month. Not all activities are required to be completed, Mueller noted that some people only partake in one or two, while others make it their mission to complete every item on the list.

"I love it because my inbox gets flooded with pictures of people doing things," said Mueller. "I love seeing all the creativity around it. It's fun to see."

Prizes at the end of the month include a $250 gift card towards an experience of your choice in Dysart, followed by a $150 gift card towards another activity, and then three gift cards towards local businesses, including a category dedicated specifically to kids.

"Winter is a struggle for a lot of people," said Mueller, "so I wanted people to experience some fun. We have so many hidden gems within our area, and people don't always know that."

For more information or to submit photos to the township for Fun in February, visit www.dysartetal.ca. Submissions will be accepted for the remainder of the month, with the draw taking place in early March.

New exhibit challenges artists to think like scientists

ADAM FRISK

Journalist

What happens when you ask a watercolourist to build a metal sculpture or a landscape painter to try their hand at portraiture? At the Rails End Gallery, the answer is a vibrant, "outside-the-box" explosion of colour and experimentation.

The gallery's latest exhibit, which opened Feb. 14, brings together 60 local artists under a theme that initially left some scratching their heads: the intersection of art and science. The concept was born from a desire to push creators into uncharted territory.

"In the fall every year, I try to figure out a theme that's going to incite people to do something they wouldn't necessarily do ordinarily," Laurie Jones, gallery executive director and curator, said in an interview last week. "I thought arts and science, that's something when we were in high school, us older people, it was, you were doing arts and science, and you were doing arts and science at university. And they always seem to be poles apart, but in fact, they are very connected, especially connected by creativity."

Jones said she became "fixated" on alchemy and issued a specific challenge to the gallery members.

"I said, 'This is a challenge for you to think outside the box. If you're an artist, think like a scientist or an experiment," the curator said.

Artists were challenged not to labour over the usual techniques and to start experimenting with patterns, new mediums, and larger brushes.

The result? An exhibit dominated by bright yellows and a sense of discovery, Jones explained. While some artists admitted the initial challenge was difficult at first, the turnout led to 60 pieces from members across Haliburton County.

The curator said the exhibit features many "firsts" from several artists who truly went outside their comfort zone, including a plein air artist painting his daughter's portrait, and an artist framing his work and showing it for the first time. Jones challenged herself to get out of her comfort zone by creating a social media video that racked up more than 300,000 views.

"All I'm doing is squeezing out a tube of paint," she admitted. "It's bizarre."

Visitors to the gallery can vote for their favourite piece by dropping a name into the gallery's fishbowl - though the director jokingly warns that "vote tampering" from extended family members is strictly monitored.

The exhibit runs now through April 4.

Maple season up in the air

THOMAS SMITH

Journalist

It's about to get real sticky in Haliburton County.

On Feb. 28, the Haliburton-Kawartha Maple Syrup Producers Committee will be kicking off the maple syrup harvesting season at Pefferlaw Farms in Uxbridge. The first maple syrup tap of the season, the event is an annual tradition to bring maple syrup producers from across the region in celebration of Ontario's earliest crop of the year.

"All I can say is that I have to wait until the season begins," said Robert Ashton, secretary for the syrup producers committee. "It's all reliant on the weather."

This past week's freezing rain and snow have not seemed to make the same dent in the sugar bushes across the county as last year. With last April's freezing rain storm, syrup producers saw damage to their lines, equipment, and were prevented from entering their bush due to icy, slippery conditions of the ground.

Once the sugar season begins, an influx in warm weather can cut off the production of syrup overnight.

Last year's winter saw an extension of the syrup season slightly with the temperature falling into the sweet spot of sugar production.

This winter has broken records across Ontario in snowfall, with Pearson International Airport reporting their snowiest January yet.

With the increased amount of snow, the high moisture content is good for the tree's health, says Ashton.

The weather seems to be on everyone's mind this time of the year, and climate change is a popular point of discussion in the syrup producers' community. With an increase in extreme weather events, syrup producers have been discussing hardier production equipment, better tree management practices, and redesigning the spigots used to tap the maple trees.

> "*It's all reliant on the weather ...*
>
> —Robert Ashton, maple syrup producer

For many across the County, harvest maple sap has been done for many generations.

"For us, it is the tradition of harvesting maple syrup," said Ashton, whose farm is based in Durham. "It is the first crop of the growing season."

With the end of winter, harvesting maple syrup is a reliable agricultural crop that requires minimal upkeep.

The Haliburton-Kawartha Maple Syrup Producers Committee invites all to their tapping ceremony held on Feb. 28. The committee is part of the Ontario Maple Syrup Producers' Association, an organization that is meant to be the official voice for syrup producers. The organization vocalizes syrup producers' needs to all levels of government, fosters community and connection between syrup producers, and offers a source of the latest information and best maple sap harvesting practices.

For those interested in joining the organization or to get involved, please visit omospa.ca.

Local curlers weigh in on Olympic 'cheating' scandal

ADAM FRISK

Journalist

As the 2026 Milan-Cortina Winter Olympics faced a firestorm over burned stones and cursing curlers, Haliburton's curling community weighed in on the scandal that rocked Team Canada in Italy.

While international media outlets blared headlines to the likes of "Winter Olympics sport is 'dead' after cheating storm," and "'A sad day': curling cheating row at Winter Games unsettles Canadians," veteran players at the club level are calling the controversy a "ridiculous" overreaction to incidental physics.

The controversy began on Feb. 13, after Sweden's Oskar Eriksson accused Canadian Marc Kennedy of double-touching the granite of the stone after release, which is a violation of the rules of play. The situation boiled over into an exchange captured on live TV mics where Kennedy told his opponent to "f— off."

Then, during the women's match the following day, a stone thrown by Canada's Rachel Homan was disqualified for the same violation.

For local curlers, the idea that a fingertip graze constitutes "cheating" for an advantage is hard to swallow, with one club member describing the uproar as "a tempest in a teapot."

"You're not going to gain an advantage by a little tiny finger touch on the granite," veteran club member, Megan Bawn, said in an interview at the rink last week. "There's not enough energy there to direct the rock in a way that you could gain an advantage from it, in my opinion."

The curler went on to suggest that Kennedy's delivery of the stone is a case of "bad habits."

"Was it a little bit of gamesmanship? I'm not sure, but I don't think any curler would look at that and say you gained an advantage," Bawn suggested. "So was it really cheating? I think I've heard the phrases used of it's just bad habits."

The drama continued when Olympic officials stationed referees at the hog lines. That resulted in stones being pulled from play, including one during Homan's match against Switzerland.

Team Canada's reaction to the allegations of cheating also raised eyebrows after Kennedy's cursing that was captured on the live broadcast.

"I don't think that was appropriate," Bawn said. "I do think anyone who's going to be on television has a role of representing themselves, and in this case, their country, with an expectation of decorum, and so that was unfortunate and inappropriate."

Fellow club member Del Watson shared a similar sentiment, labelling the infraction a "ridiculous foul" rather than a calculated act of cheating.

"I didn't think at that level there'd be any offenders," he said. "But it was such an incidental thing. I can't see it did anything [to the stone]."

So was it a foul? Yes. Technically, the rules state the stone must be delivered strictly by the handle. Is it cheating? The consensus from the Haliburton Curling Club is a firm "no."

Team Canada went on to win gold in the men's event while the women claimed bronze.

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Representation

WHEN I was growing up in the Haliburton Highlands, playing house league hockey on Thursday nights, I used to get changed in a closet.

It was tucked around the back of the concession stand, at the former Minden rink. I was sweating before I even got onto the ice, as I'd get changed on top of my hockey bag, sitting beside the furnace.

So when I watched the commentary of the men's gold medal hockey game, the most viewed game in the country, presented by two women - two women who know the sport better than anyone, two women with multiple gold medals themselves, two women who also have lives and kids and a deeply rooted passion for Canada's game - I felt emotional.

Editorial

Emily Stonehouse

Because I sat there with my step-daughters, and suddenly, they realized it wasn't just a boys club. It could be for them, for anyone, and the child inside my soul, the little one who got changed next to a furnace every week, she beamed.

Of course we watched the women's game as well. We saw the best of the best, out there on the ice. And I was reminded that that's what the Olympics is all about: representation. We send these athletes; the ones who are teachers and parents and retail workers and servers, we send them to the largest stage in the world.

Many are people we have never heard of before. While some of the NHL players ring familiar, the vast majority of Olympic headlines have been names I didn't know. How fast they can become household favourites.

And that makes the representation even better. Because they're not necessarily superstars. They're Canadians, just like us, with a passion, talent, and dedication to a sport that makes them feel alive.

We can't help but share the energy that came alongside a year of 'Elbows Up' competitions. It felt important this year. To the point where, at the beginning of the games, I found myself grumbling at every accolade the American team had wracked up.

They're not deserving of anything, I thought to myself. They find themselves on a stage far too often these days, and for all the wrong reasons.

But as I watched the games roll out, I was reminded that a big part of that centre stage role isn't the average American. It's someone who takes up too much space, too much airtime, and too much brain power for those of us chasing our inner calm.

A bully with bells on, who weasled his way to the top.

But he doesn't get any more airtime, here. Because through these Olympics, with athletes donned in red, white, and blue, I saw passion, I saw pride, I saw queer representation, I saw hope, I saw inclusion, I saw humanity.

When the American team captured gold on Sunday, my heart broke. Of course it did. I am a red-blooded Canadian. But when they brought out the kids and jersey of Johnny Gaudreau, an American player recently killed by a drunk driver, I didn't see an us versus them situation.

I saw humans. I saw men showing compassion, showing emotions, showing love.

And that type of representation, that reminder that people showing up and putting their best faces forward; as commentators, as players, and as representatives on the largest stage, it reminds us what really matters.

That somewhere out there, a little girl is getting changed in a closet.

But the future is bright, the possibilities, endless.

Going downhill fast

WHEN SKIER Lindsey Vonn crashed on her Olympic downhill run, one safety measure was made evident in the footage of the accident. Her ski suit was puffed up around her chest, showing her airbag vest had inflated sometime during the calamity.

This year's winter Olympics are the first in which downhill skiers have been required to wear these personal safety devices. In the works since 2011, airbag vests are worn under ski suits and are deployed when a complex algorithm determines that a fall (and not just the wild changes in acceleration that occur during a run) is occurring.

The International Ski and Snowboard Federation (FIS) made airbags mandatory in World Cup and Olympic competition for high speed events like downhill after two Italian ski racers died from injuries during training within the span of a year in 2024/2025. Their ruling was made as a part of a larger investigation into skiing safety, with the goal of making an inherently risky sport as safe as possible.

Humans & Techonology

erin kernohan-berning

Ski racing almost inevitably comes with injury. High speeds, rapid directional changes, slippery surfaces, sharp skis, and humans being awkward sacks of meat and bones that have no business going that fast downhill, mean that falls can be disastrous. Some of the most common injuries include joint, limb, head, and spinal injuries.

Airbags are designed to mitigate serious upper body injuries but have not always been popular among skiers. When they were first introduced, high profile skiers including Vonn expressed concerns and doubts about the efficacy of the devices, the practicality of travelling with them (such as through airports where the air canisters can be flagged by security), and costs for replacement (making skiers more hesitant to use them during training runs, arguably the most important time to use them). However, many adopted using the airbags prior to the FIS ruling, including Vonn who expressed that she was glad to have worn hers during a 2019 crash.

Cut resistant undergarments in suits are another safety measure being used by many in skiing – sharp skis mean that deep cut injuries are also common during mishaps. Skier and now manufacturer Victor Wiacek was inspired to create a line of cut resistant gear after being cut by skis seriously enough to require a tourniquet on the slopes. Ski racer Breezy Johnson credits such a garment from preventing a serious injury after a collision with another skier – the ski sliced through her clothing but stopped at the cut resistant layer, leaving her with just a bruise.

Another innovation in the work is releasable bindings to prevent leg injuries during falls. Vonn is still in hospital having undergone multiple surgeries after her crash for a very complex leg fracture – something commentators have wondered could have been helped if her skis had been made to somehow come off, decreasing the force on her leg. Releasable bindings are an even more complicated problem to solve, but one that manufacturers are looking at using the same algorithm that triggers the airbag as a starting point.

Protective equipment won't necessarily prevent all injuries – in 2015 Matthias Mayer broke two vertebrae during a world cup run despite his airbag inflating. A retrospective study in the European journal of trauma and emergency surgery focusing on patients admitted to a Level 1 trauma centre in the Bern University Hospital found that in ski injuries serious enough to warrant that level of treatment, back protection of any kind had a limited impact on the extent or treatment of the injury. That's not to say that protection didn't prevent injury at all (because the study didn't look at skiers who wore back protection and escaped injury), but that there may be a point at which the forces and speeds at play in the worst crashes may overwhelm most safety devices to some extent.

That's why implementing changes in things like course design are also being explored by researchers by mapping courses and identifying riskier turns and banks through computer modelling. This could allow for measures like more effective safety fencing placement and wider buffer zones. Research into the types of acceleration and forces at play when skiing around gates could also inform how courses are set up. Courses can be designed to slow skiers down, preventing serious crashes in the first place.

People watch and participate in high speed sports for the excitement and challenge inherent in them. World class skiers seem to defy what physics should allow humans to do. Using technology to enhance safety can also enhance our enjoyment of these sports. At some point physics will win, but when it does, we'd like to see our skiers get back up in one piece and try again.

points of view

Fasten forward

Loon Tales

Steve Galea

I MOVED fluidly like a Siamese cat – or perhaps a puddle that a Siamese cat just made – while wearing an understated ensemble comprised of black, relaxed fit track pants and, for dramatic contrast, a French-made noir-coloured tee-shirt. The look was topped off by a gray cardigan and blue-and-black checked slippers.

I was not, however, sashaying down the catwalks of Milan, Paris, or West Guilford. No sir, I was just leaving the upstairs washroom and making my way down the hallway into the living room where Jenn sat with her morning coffee.

Once in front of her, I threw my hands on my hips and casually pirouetted.

That's when she looked at me and said, "Did you use the air freshener and leave the fan on?"

At first, I thought she said that ironically.

But, it also appeared as if Jenn was taking the irony thing a bit too far by acting as if she had totally forgotten that this week was the one I designated as "Fashion Week", when the subject came up last July.

Needless to say, I didn't want to ruin the vibe by reminding her that when I made the suggestion, she peered overtop her book, and said, "Huh? Yeah, …. Sure, whatever."

Still, I was beginning to think that she was appreciating the nuances of my latest look, which, frankly, I worked really hard on.

Sadly, I know I'm not alone on this either. This lack of fashion appreciation is something that we men have spoken about in hunt camps, garages, and man caves with our buddies for years. In fact, I'd bet right now there are two guys baiting their hooks in an ice hut not too far away, lamenting how their wives have never once complimented them on their toques, matching mittens, rubber boots and bait-bespoked snow bibs.

Of course, we're men, so we don't normally dwell on these things.

But, dang it, this is Fashion Week in my house, so you'll have to forgive me for not just letting this pass.

"Excuse me, have you got nothing to say about my look?" I said.

"Uh, you look … nice?" she replied.

I spun again, to ensure she had no excuses.

"Nice? What's my mood?" I continued.

"Weird" was not the word I was looking for.

So, I pointed to the top button of my cardigan, which was deliberately undone, and a clear indicator that the look I was going for was "Whimsy!"

"Oh, sure …," she replied. "Whimsy, you say? Yeah, now I see it."

Was I mad? Let's just say I did up that top button, then and there.

Frankly, I don't even know why I try. I mean this was almost an identical repeat of last year's Fashion Week debacle, when I strutted out in a daring outfit consisting of vintage boxer shorts, lumberjack socks, and a flowing red scarf. Anybody with any fashion sense at all would have celebrated this provocative look. But not Jenn. She just ran around the house ensuring all our blinds were shut.

All this has got me thinking that she might not be into Fashion Week at all – and that maybe next year's event should be cancelled or at least shortened to only two days.

The thing is, right now, we have four more days to go – and it just got awkward.

So, I think I'll spend some time where people appreciate sartorial efforts. Anyone want to go ice fishing?

pic *of the* past

This formal photo of the William James Hughey family was probably taken about 1910, near the family farm in Wilberforce. Seated from left to right, are son Robert Roy, William Hughey, daughter Pauline, Helen Charlotte (Nellie) nee Paull, daughter Annis. Standing at rear are son Walton, daughter Ethel, son William Jr. and daughter Mable whose mother Melissa (Barragar) died circa 1898. The photo was likely organized by daughter Ethel home from her dressmaking business in Toronto. Note: Walton died at age 17 from pneumonia. William Jr. perished in Rock Lake while hunting in his early twenties. Ethel married Percy Paull. Pauline married Frank Dummett. They moved west to Alberta. Roy never married. He died in 1952 in Kelowna, B.C. Annis married Ralph Somerville and after his death married widower, John Mossion. Mable married Walter Clark and stayed in Wilberforce. /submitted by the Clark family in Wilberforce

Cold

Our road

Down

Sharon Lynch

IT WAS not a quick process. In the summer Monika would head outside without even considering what she was wearing. She'd simply throw on her shoes, grab the leash and go. Not these days. Now she wrapped her body in layers from head to toe. Neck scarf under the down jacket and another around her face, double mitts, hat plus hood, and last but not least: boots with steel grippers attached.

Having just heard from her neighbour that this was the coldest winter on record, Monika was not surprised. And she knew Henry would not want to stay outside more than five minutes before digging in his heels and refusing to go farther. Who could blame him?

There was a time when she would have dropped the dog back home and then set out again on her own. Heck – she was a hearty Canadian. She could take the cold. But as time passed, she no longer felt the need to prove her strength and determination. Her toughness. Her endurance. Now she wanted to be comfortable.

One New Years Eve a few decades before, Monika had slowly walked to a dance through minus forty-five weather. The night had been clear and calm, the sky a mass of stars as she had made her way down the Whitehorse street.

In the distance she could make out the lights at the community centre, smoke rising straight up as thick, humped figures trudged to the front entrance. It might have been too cold to drive but it had taken more than a little bit of winter to stop the merry-makers.

Wind was always the deciding factor, she thought as she now encouraged Henry to walk a little farther. Wind chill or lack thereof could turn minus twenty from frigid to fresh and today it was the former. Even her eyes stung when she had to turn to walk into the breeze. And that's all it took at these temperatures – just a breeze to burn your eyes and slow your breath.

But there were positives to this weather, she reminded herself. Fewer people wanting to chat as she walked. Bright skies and starlit nights. Outdoor sports that thrived on cold. No rain. No slush. And amazingly, life continued around her. The chickadees and nuthatches flocked the feeders while grey and red squirrels scoured the snowy ground beneath. A barred owl taking advantage of the action while deer and turkeys continued their endless pursuit of food across Monika's backyard.

She did miss the early morning bird songs. The soft kiss of sunshine on her cheek. The flow of air around her sandled feet. It was all coming. The sun was feeling warmer and the morning and evenings were lightening up.

So for now she was content with the warm fire greeting her as she comes through the door with Henry. And later, with his furry form snuggled into her side, she knows that mug of cocoa is much more inviting than a cold beer.

letters to the editor

New log chute ideas

To the Editor,

On the front page of last week's *Minden Times* there is a major article on the Hawk Lake Log Chute. Though I am not sure of the meaning of a "test of time", but as we are now a full century later than when the logging operations occurred, it is very clear that those logging operations were very destructive and made vast changes to the tree growth situation in our forests.

The Log Chute at Big Hawk Lake has been kept going as a historical exhibit related to those European wars where technology required the strength of the tree trunks. My first contact with the Chute was during the heat-wave Easter of 1977, the photo I have shows a smaller structure. A big re-building happened some years later together with a well structured display of the logging business of the times, with the Chute operating when lake levels permitted. The control of the water levels is set to the needs of the Trent Canal System's operation, which means that very high water flows are frequently needed during spring snow melts.

I witnessed these waterflows several times as I had a part in creating the Hiking Trails connecting the North Shore Road Trailhead to the Crests of Kennisis Trail. These water flows down the Log Chute caused frequent breaks. The corrections of this damage had to be postponed during Covid, so it is no wonder that major repairs are needed now.

These are going to be expensive and unlikely to be proof against damage as the control of the water flow is for the benefit of the canal. My question now is, could this money be better spent on alternative displays about the history of logging, with greater use of the Museum facilities in Stanhope and Dorset? A possible alternative display could be made similar to a log cabin in South Galipo Lake in Algonquin Park, which I had the great fortune to see when canoeing with a great canoe traveller in the late 1970s.

There are a group of Galipo Lakes quite close to Haliburton Forest which were much used as a winter base for the logging operations. At the SE edge of South Galipo Lake we visited this log cabin which used local cedar logs in a truly sustainable roof structure. These cedar logs were perhaps 12 inches diameter, all cut lengthwise across a diameter so that half of the cut logs could be laid at the appropriate slope as two halves of the roof, with the centre sections scooped clean to act as trenches. The other halves of cedar logs had cleaned centres so that they could be laid on top from trench to trench of the lower half log to produce a truly waterproof roof on site. A model of sort of "in forest" construction could be an exhibit beside the present log chute, to show how different approaches to log construction could make differences to their value.

Peter Brogden,
Algonquin Highlands

A few details missed

To the Editor,

Thanks for the excellent coverage of my stories about Miners' Bay, as provided in the article in the January 27th issue of the *Minden Times,* by Thomas Smith. I am pleased that my presentation helped make local history "come alive".

Knowing how difficult it is to move to print from an audio source, it is not unexpected that there will be a few errors. For example, my mother moved me home to Miners' Bay when I was 5 days old. I also hope that I was a benevolent "dictator", in my operation of the lodge!

There are a few other corrections that could be made, including the spelling of names, and dates. Consequently, should anyone wish to use this article as a historical document, they are encouraged to contact me for clarification.

Russ Wunker
Miners' Bay

Highlands East 2026 draft budget includes 5.96% tax hike

ADAM FRISK

Journalist

The Municipality of Highlands East released its 2026 draft budget, which highlighted both significant infrastructure and public safety investments as well as a push from council for clearer financial reporting.

The proposed budget was presented during a Feb. 17 special meeting of council, which outlines a total increase of $477,666 over the previous year, resulting in a 5.96 per cent municipal tax rate increase. For the average homeowner, the tax hike represents an additional $34.95 for every $100,000 of assessed property value.

The rising cost of provincial services and municipal operations is among the drivers of the tax increase for this year. Provincial policing costs are set to increase by 11 per cent, resulting in a total annual bill of more than $1.32 million. According to the draft budget, that's an increase of more than $131,000 for the year.

A three-and-a-half per cent wage increase is set to be implemented across all departments following negotiated union contracts. This will likely be offset partially by a nearly five per cent decrease in group benefit costs. The draft document further projects a jump in insurance costs of somewhere between six and eight per cent.

The fire department is slated for some major equipment upgrades, including $121,500 for new "Jaws of Life" sets and various fire hall improvements across the township.

The draft budget highlights several major capital projects aimed at long-term growth and safety, including significant work planned for Hadlington Road and the Glamor Lake Road extension projects, which are supported by the Canada Community-Building Fund.

The municipality is leaning into short-term rental (STR) licensing, which is expected to generate $45,000 in revenue for 2026. Additionally, the Municipal Accommodation Tax is projected to net $40,000, half of which will support regional tourism.

However, during the special meeting of council, Deputy Mayor Cecil Ryall raised concerns that the tracking of the financial performance of the STR program is "almost impossible to follow" because it's divided across multiple departments within the budget. He went on to suggest that a consolidated income statement for the STR program be presented quarterly or semi-annually.

"There's no consolidated statement of what it is doing for us," he said. "An example could be an income statement identifying the amount of money we take in versus the amount we pay out. I don't see that anywhere as a standalone entity."

Ryall went on to question whether the STR program remains under the jurisdiction of bylaw enforcement and if that's the right place for it.

"To me, that does not make sense," he said. "They are enforcement people; they are not strategic planning people. That's not their job."

The deputy mayor went on to express a desire to look beyond 2026 and develop what he called a "strategic operating plan" by 2027 that better aligns budget spending with long-term goals.

"It's hard to identify what you're going to spend if you don't know where you're going," Ryall said. "You don't plan for a war when you're in it; you plan for a war before it starts."

Council also discussed during the meeting a slight increase to the budget for the municipality's 25th anniversary celebrations.

The draft budget will be refined based on council direction and brought back for final approval on March 10.

Minden Memories

Taken in 1930, this photo shows Highway 35 workmen six miles south of Minden at Jeans Lake. /Photo courtesy of the Minden Hills Cultural Centre

HALIBURTON COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY

Book of the Week

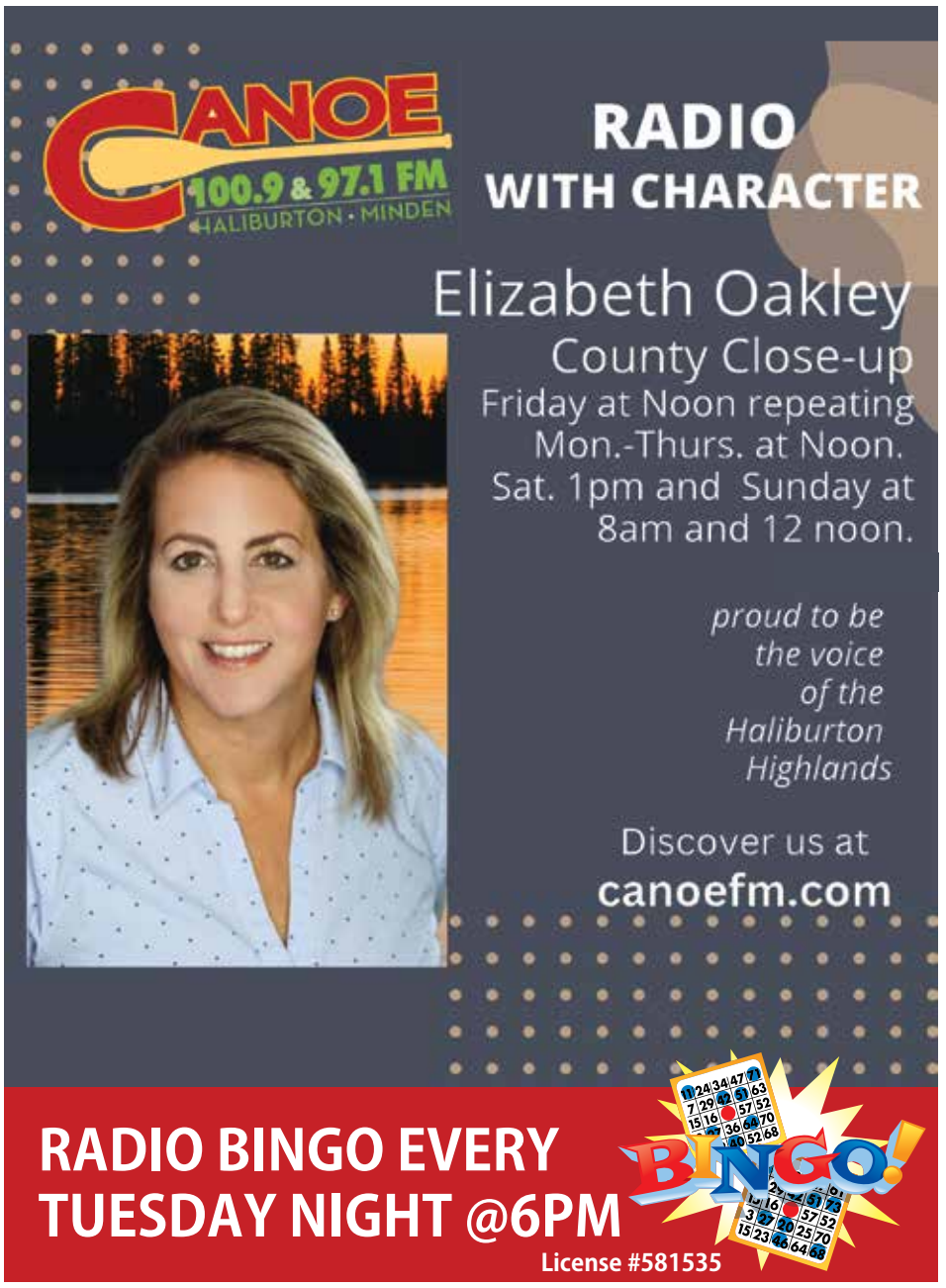
In 1942, Thomas, a young entomologist, is dispatched to a remote island to help the Allies develop biological weapons. Isolated and tightly controlled, the scientists manufacture anthrax and search the island's insects for an ideal viral carrier. Sixty years later in the same region of Quebec, an extreme heat wave brings swarms of horseflies and inexplicable outbreaks of human violence. Theodore, numbed by exhaustion and drink, is jolted awake by a horsefly bite and impulsively abducts his dementia-stricken grandfather. *Horsefly*, loosely inspired by history, explores humanity's doomed attempt to dominate nature - and nature's brutal response.

Horsefly by Mireille Gagné is available to borrow from the Haliburton County Public Library. Visit haliburtonlibrary.ca to place a hold or learn more.

February Folk festivities

February Folk Fest welcomed Terra Lightfoot to the stage at the Haliburton Legion as a part of the month-long performances. With shows continuing to the end of February all across the County, there is bound to be something for everyone. /ADAM FRISK staff

Lauren Margison performed with Melissa Stephens this past weekend at the Highland Hills United Church in Minden, dazzling a full-house with songs from various genres as a part of February Folk Festival. Above, February Folk Fest volunteer and coordinator Barrie Martin introduces Margison to the stage. Right, Margison belts out songs from her impressive career in music. /TIM YANO staff photographer



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That's how we protect Ontario.

PROTECT ONTARIO

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Smoke was still be seen billowing days after the fire from the rubble at the Kingdon Timber Mart in Harcourt. /THOMAS SMITH staff

Timber Mart headed towards rebuild

from page 1

from within County boundaries, most of the fire was extinguished by 1:30 a.m. the following morning. One firefighter slipped on the ice in the process, and was treated immediately for a broken arm before being taken to the Haliburton Hospital.

Baughman shared that with a fire of that size, it was required to stay and monitor for potential hot spots at the site. "We were worried that there would be some buried embers that could reignite," he said, noting that he stayed until 10 a.m. to keep a close watch before duties were handed over to another individual. "We needed to guarantee that it wouldn't reignite and take down the other buildings."

Some of the other buildings on-site included the lumber yard itself, and a number of structures holding materials such as drywall, vehicles, and propane. Due to the quick action taken by local firefighters, the fire did not spread beyond the main building, but the building as a whole is completely decimated from the flames

"It was a huge loss," noted Baughman, "but it could have been a lot worse."

The fire left the community in shock; a reminder of how fast emergencies make waves in a small town. "This business has served Harcourt and the East side of Haliburton County for some 50 years, serving as the area's lumber and hardware supplier," said Dysart et al Mayor Murray Fearrey. "It is hoped the rebuilding will start soon as this is important as a needed service to area residents."

Alex Banelopoulos, a media representative from Kingdon Timber Mart, confirmed during a phone call on Feb. 19 that while the Harcourt location is beyond repair, the company will be transporting trailers to the site to ensure business continuity. "That way, we can continue to move lumber from that site," she said, "with an eventual opening sometime in the future."

Staff have been allocated to the Gooderham site for the interim, until business continues operation in a safe manner at the Harcourt location.

Kingdon operates five Timber Mart locations, including Lakefield, Havelock, Harcourt, Peterborough, and Gooderham. The family industry dates back to 1846, with George Samuel Kingdon immigrating from England to set up a cooperage shop dedicated to barrel supplies, providing materials to Quaker Oats.

> *"I know there are a lot of good memories there, and it was a sentimental building for the region."*
>
> — Kevin Dyck, Kingdon Co–owner

The Harcourt location has been under the Kingdon umbrella since 2024. Kevin Dyck, a sixth generation of the Kingdon family, is now the co-owner of the establishment, and the VP of operations. "We're forging ahead," confirmed Dyck during a phone interview late last week. "We're hoping to be open and operational again for building supplies by end of next week."

While the fire was devastating to the family, Dyck noted some 'silver linings' to the situation. "No one was hurt," he said, "and the fire didn't spread."

He also noted the dedication from their team during the trying time. "I've been so heartened by our staff," he said, sharing their interest to return to work as soon as possible. "I know there are a lot of good memories there, and it was a sentimental building for the region."

One of the first steps in order to rebuild is working alongside the municipal building department, which Dyck noted was already well underway. "They're keen to see things move along," he noted of the Dysart department, "but I don't have a crystal ball for when it will be completed." At the time of the call, he was hoping for one to two years for a full rebuild.

While the rebuild will take time, Dyck shared that staff have set up interim offices, with phones and electrical connecting to the site by this week. Their operations will be "business as usual," while they try to focus on next steps for the former community hub.

Municipality of Dysart et al

135 Maple Ave., P.O. Box 389,
Haliburton, ON K0M 1S0
Telephone: (705) 457-1740
Email: info@dysartetal.ca
Website: www.dysartetal.ca

NOTICE OF VIRTUAL PUBLIC HEARING
COMMITTEE OF ADJUSTMENT

- **DATE:** Wednesday, March 11th, 2026
- **TIME:** 11:00 am.
- **LOCATION:** The Committee of Adjustment meeting will be held in the Council Chambers and electronically via Zoom. The meeting will be live streamed to YouTube.

APPLICATIONS:

1. D13-MV-2025-008 Jakubowski

- The following variances are requested to legalize a private cabin and attached deck on a lot located in the WR4L zone:

a) A variance to Section 3.1(e)(i) to permit a private cabin to be located within a front yard abutting a shoreline.

b) A variance to Section 3.1(e)(ii) to permit a private cabin to be located on two storeys as opposed to the requirement of being located entirely on one storey.

c) A variance to Section 3.1(e)(iv) to permit the maximum total ground floor area of open decks, patios and balconies attached or within 2 metres of a private cabin to be 19 square metres (204.5 square feet) as opposed to the permitted maximum ground floor area of 15 square metres (161.4 square feet).

d) A variance to Section 3.1(f)(iii) to permit the maximum total ground floor area of open decks, patios and balconies attached or within 2 metres of a two storey accessory building to be 19 square metres (204.5 square feet) as opposed to the permitted maximum ground floor area of 15 square metres (161.4 square feet).

e) A variance to Section 5.2 to permit a private cabin to have a minimum water setback of 4.27 meters (14 feet) as opposed to the required minimum of 20 metres (66 feet).

- Location: Part Lot 14 Concession 3, Lot 110, Plan 482, in the Geographic Township of Dudley, in the Municipality of Dysart et al.
Roll No. 020-000-55100

2. D13-MV-2026-001 Pearcey

- The following variances are requested to permit a decreased lot area on a property in the WR4 zone:

a) A variance to Section 5.2 to permit a lot to have a minimum lot area of 3199 square metres (0.79 acres) as opposed to the legal non complying minimum of 3270 square metres (0.8 acres).

- Location: Part Lot 16, Concession 10, Lot 36, Plan 404, in the Geographic Township of Guilford, in the Municipality of Dysart et al.
Roll No. 041-000-58500

3. D13-MV-2026-002 Clarke

- The following variances are requested to permit a private cabin and shed to have a decreased street setback and an increase to the total number of accessory buildings on a lot located in the WR4L zone:

a) A variance to Section 3.30(c) to permit a private cabin to have a minimum street setback from the edge of the travelled portion of Smith Lane of 3 metres (10 feet) as opposed to the required minimum of 7.5 metres (25 feet).

b) A variance to Section 3.30(c) to permit a shed to have a minimum street setback from the edge of the travelled portion of Smith Lane of 4.5 metres (15 feet) as opposed to the permitted required of 7.5 metres (25 feet).

c) A variance to Section 5.2 to permit 3 accessory buildings (plus 1 one storey building less than 10 square metres (108 square feet) in area) as opposed to the permitted maximum of 2 (plus 1 one storey building less than 10 square metres (108 square feet) in area).

- Location: Part Lot 22, Concession 1, Plan 19R-4756, Part 4 in the Geographic Township of Dysart, in the Municipality of Dysart et al.
Roll No. 010-000-04130

FOR MORE INFORMATION about electronic meetings and public participation in an electronic meeting, contact the Secretary-Treasurer at ameijer@dysartetal.ca.

ANY PERSON is entitled to attend the hearing to express his/her views about these applications or may be represented by an agent for that purpose. If you do not attend the hearing the Committee may proceed in your absence, and you will not be entitled to any further notice of the proceedings. The Committee will accept oral and written submissions.

A COPY OF THE DECISION will be sent to the applicant, the agent and to each person who has filed with the Secretary-Treasurer a written request for notice of the decision.

FURTHER INFORMATION: including specific information about the zone provisions affected by each application, and electronic meeting process is available from the Planning and Land Information Department at the Municipal Office by appointment only (8:30 am to 4:30 pm, Monday to Friday) or by phoning 705-457-1740.

Adam Meijer
Secretary-Treasurer, Committee of Adjustment

Sharing stories with Gail Stelter

EMILY STONEHOUSE
Editor

They say that stories are the strings that hold generations together; bits and pieces of the past, shared through the lens of someone who lived those chapters.

And if they aren't shared in some way, shape, or form, those stories are lost forever.

That was a thought that haunted Gail Stelter. She had lived a full life in her seven plus decades. She had found her soulmate, raised a happy family, wore many hats as an educator, and volunteered all over the County.

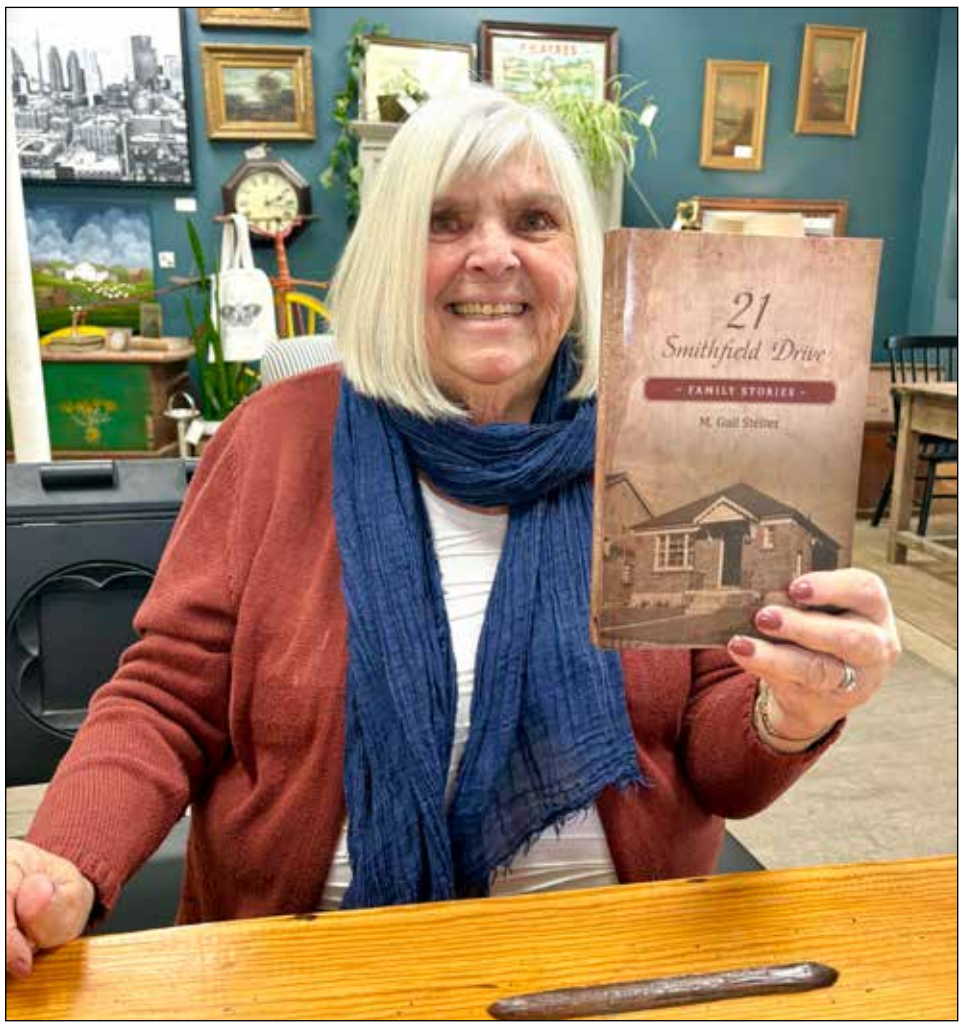
But there was something missing. "I've always been a writer," said Stelter, as we sat down for a coffee on the first spring-like day of the year. "I knew I'd always write a book."

At the age of 73, Stelter set out to do just that. And not just any book; a story of her life. "I wrote this book, my family stories, my memoir, for my children, my grandchildren, and my still-to-come great-grandchildren," opens Stelter in her preface. "They will experience, through my lens, the happenings of the war years and the 1950s and 1960s; stories that by that time will have taken place a hundred or so years ago."

Many would recognize Stelter's name from our own pages. She has written a number of columns over the years, including the current *Senior Side,* which runs bi-weekly in our *County Life* papers.

"I wrote my first book when I was 11 years old," recalled Stelter, reminiscing on her passion for words. She noted that while she didn't finish the book her young heart had set out to do, she knew that she had found her passion.

As an adult, Stelter completed a certificate in writing from the University of Toronto. From the classes, she received direction and mentorship from David Layton. This was when the wheels started to turn for a collection of stories that captured a life from days gone by. "My goal when I started the program was to write my stories," she said. "And I was determined to get that done before I turned 77."



Author Gail Stelter took the time to sit down with the local newspaper, and share her stories that went into her newly published book, *21 Smithfield Drive.* /EMILY STONEHOUSE staff

The stories started to flow out of her. Her book, *21 Smithfield Drive,* an homage to her childhood home, is a collection of 60 short stories, split up into three sections: Before There Was Me, a Baby Boomer Childhood, and Young and In Love, 1967 and 1968. Covering the first 19 years of Stelter's life, and unravelling an era of wartime stories and post-war convention, transporting the reader back to a time not often shared.

"But I never wrote this book to become a famous author," said Stelter. "My audience will always be my family."

With four children and nine grandchildren, Stelter's world revolves around her family. And with that priority in mind, she firmly believes in sharing the memories she has with the next generations. "It becomes a social history," she said. "And people enjoy reading these social histories through the lens of those who lived it."

When it comes to words of the wise for budding writers, Stelter offers some tried and tested advice: "Take a course," she said, noting that it doesn't need to be a post-grad course or anything formal, "just something you get you thinking about writing. Something to kickstart those ideas."

Stelter also noted the importance of reading. "You can't be a writer if you are not a reader," she said. "Keep reading."

And most importantly: "Decide on who you want your audience to be." Stelter noted that with her audience always being her own family, it has shaped and rounded her stories, in an effort to showcase the bits and pieces that really carved out her life.

On Sunday, March 8 at 2 p.m., Stelter will be hosting a book launch at the Haliburton United Church. "It will not be what is usually expected at such an event," she said. "I am planning a Story-Sharing Afternoon, and I am inviting the residents of Haliburton County. History is people, and our shared everyday life stories are personal and important. At my story-sharing afternoon, I will read a story or two from my book and hopefully inspire others to share their stories."

Because stories are what ties us together; bits and pieces of the past, shared through the lens of someone who lived those chapters. We have to share these stories, otherwise, they will float away with the wind. "Everyone has stories," said Stelter. "Was there ever a story that was so unique that you'll never forget it?"

Huskies hockey

The Haliburton County Huskies faced off against the Picking Panthers on Monday, Feb. 16 for a sold-out Family Day game in Minden. The local team fell to the visitors with a score of 7-2. Pickering Panthers are currently third in the OJHL, with 74 points wracked up over the season. The Huskies trail not fair behind with 68 points heading into the final games of the regular season. /TIM YANO staff photographer

Huskies Hockey

Despite a well-fought game, the Huskies lost 4-2 against the Markham Royals on Saturday, Feb. 21 on home ice. The final game of the regular season is slotted for this coming Saturday, Feb. 28, against the Stouffville Spirit in Minden.
/TIM YANO staff photographer

HALIBURTON COUNTY HUSKIES

Home Game

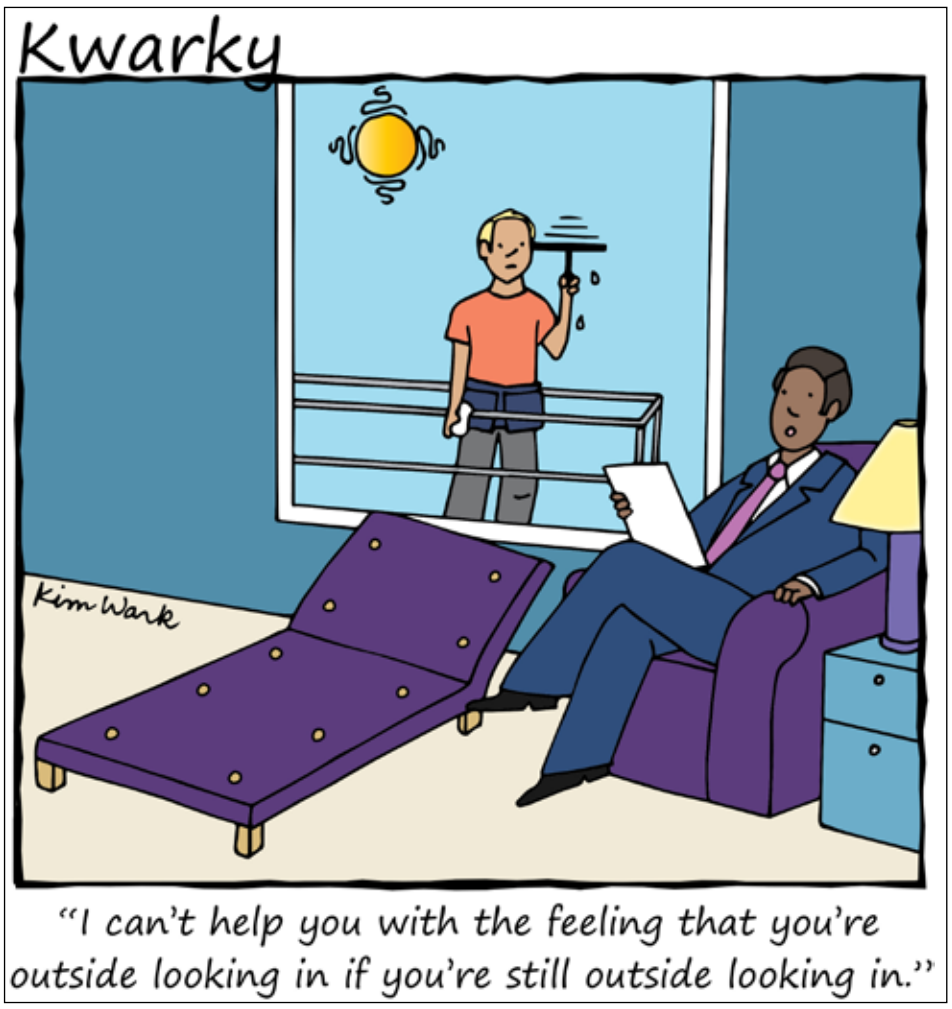
STOUFFVILLE SPIRIT VS HALIBURTON COUNTY HUSKIES

Saturday, Feb. 28 - 4 p.m.

S.G. Nesbitt Memorial Arena

For more information please visit our website

WWW.HUSKIESHOCKEY.CA



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SUDOKU

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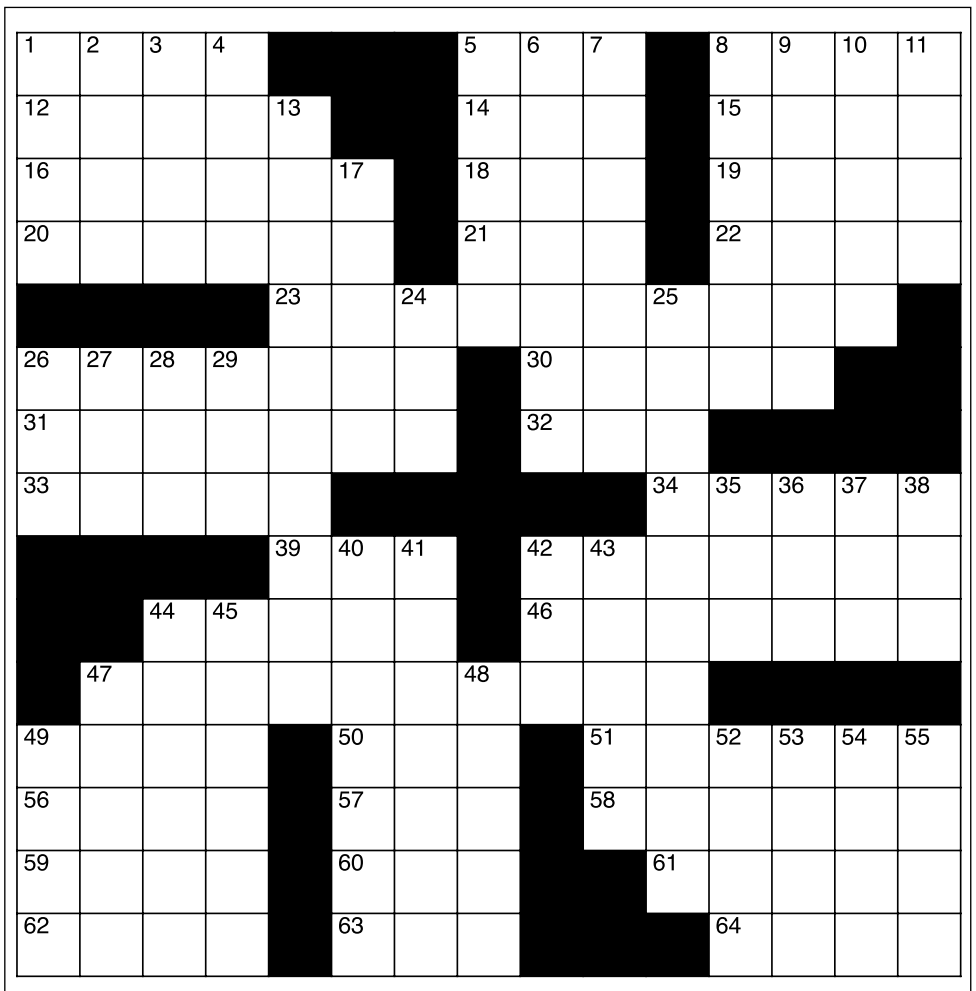
Fun By The Numbers

Like puzzles? Then you'll love sudoku. This mind-bending puzzle will have you hooked from the moment you square off, so sharpen your pencil and put your sudoku savvy to the test!

Level: Intermediate

Here's How It Works:
Sudoku puzzles are formatted as a 9x9 grid, broken down into nine 3x3 boxes. To solve a sudoku, the numbers 1 through 9 must fill each row, column and box. Each number can appear only once in each row, column and box. You can figure out the order in which the numbers will appear by using the numeric clues already provided in the boxes. The more numbers you name, the easier it gets to solve the puzzle!

Answers on page 15



CLUES ACROSS
1. What travellers must do
5. Calendar month
8. Hopefully quickly
12. Once more
14. Bravo! Bravo! Bravo!
15. 'Cheers' actress Perlman
16. Astronomy unit
18. Savings vehicle
19. Get your ducks in this
20. Right away
21. Popular sports league
22. Containers
23. Entireties
26. One who wassails
30. Turned-up position
31. Extreme modesty
32. Writing utensil
33. Rewards (archaic)
34. Ancient capital
39. S. American wood sorrel
42. General discomfort
44. Philippine island
46. A witty saying
47. One who summarizes
49. Covered in
50. Mimic
51. Henry was a notable one
56. Daughter of Hera and Zeus
57. Retired NFLer Newton
58. Playground equipment
59. Concept
60. Satisfaction
61. Fishing net
62. Hammer end
63. A father's male child
64. Japanese drink

CLUES DOWN
1. Off-Broadway figure
2. Gelatinous substance
3. Concern
4. 'Lick It Up' rockers
5. Serbian river
6. Part of a hat
7. Bowl-shaped drinking vessel
8. Semitic language
9. Utter a shrill cry
10. Long times
11. Animal parts
13. Causing annoyance
17. Amorous talker
24. Attempt
25. Harmonic effects
26. Cost per mile
27. They __
28. Bitterly regret
29. Not even
35. A way to drop
36. Title of respect
37. World leader
38. Georgia rockers
40. National capital
41. Great Plains people
42. Duck-sized dinosaur genus
43. Architectural recesses
44. Member of U.S. Navy
45. Mountainous
47. Kite bird
48. Sweetheart (archaic)
49. Popular snack made of potato
52. 70s songsters The Bee __
53. SE China port __-men
54. Something to fill up
55. League of Legends character

Answers on page 15

From left, Stefanie Seguin and Brandi Loverock were positioned at the donation table to raise money for Wilberforce Elementary School's lunch program.

Need for speed

Steph Chow accepts donations from excited visitors to the Speedfest event held on Sunday, Feb. 15 on Benoir Lake. The funds went towards Wilberforce Elementary School's lunch program. /THOMAS SMITH staff

The annual Speedfest event in Highlands East saw hundreds of visitors to participate and cheer on riders from across the province. Right, Shawn Watling visited the Speedfest on Sunday, Feb. 15 to attempt a run for the Guinness World Record for the world's fasted tracked amphibian.

Municipality of Dysart et al

Tenders

The Municipality of Dysart et al invites vendors to submit bids for any or all tenders:

- **Supply of Calcium Chloride**
  Closes March 3, 2026
- **Engineering Services—Replacement of Sand Grizzly**
  Closes March 6, 2026
- **Highland Street Public Realm Improvements**
  Closes March 12th, 2026

Register at no cost, view all bid opportunities, and submit your bid online at:

dysartetal.bidsandtenders.ca
Printed or emailed submissions are not accepted

Review our "how-to" guide at:

dysartetal.ca/municipal-government/bids-and-tenders

Municipality of Dysart et al
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EMPLOYMENT

The Corporation of the County of Haliburton Requires a Grants & Procurements Coordinator (18-month contract)

The County of Haliburton is currently accepting applications for a Grants & Procurements Coordinator. This new, vacant position is currently offered as a fixed term 18-month contract.

Reporting to the Deputy Treasurer, this position secures external funding opportunities and ensures compliant and transparent procurement processes. This dual-function role prioritizes responsibilities associated with identifying, securing, and administering grants The successful candidate will have post-secondary education and 4-5 years of experience in a relevant field.

This position includes participation in the OMERS defined benefit pension program and employer paid extended health benefits.The hourly wage range is $36.32 - $42.49.

Visit our website at www.haliburtoncounty.ca/careers for a more detailed posting and job description.

Please forward your resume to shume@haliburtoncounty.ca no later than **Thursday, March 5, 2026, at 4:30pm.**

We thank all who apply for this position; however only those selected for an interview will be contacted.

The County of Haliburton is an equal opportunity employer. Accommodation can be provided in all steps of the hiring process, please contact Human Resources for further details.

In accordance with the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act, the information gathered will be used solely for the purpose of job selection.

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March 25	Minden Bible Church

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OBITUARIES

In Loving Memory of

Nancy McPherson

Passed away peacefully with her family by her side at Collingwood General and Marine Hospital on Thursday, February 12, 2026.

Loving wife of the late James "Jim" McPherson. Loved mother of Christine (Lyle), Deborah (Peter) and Stephen. Loved grandma of Nikki, Katie, Kyle, Mathew, Brandon, Daniel, Samantha, David, Jessica, Matthew and her many great grandkids. Stepmother of Mitch (Susan), Allan (Connie) and dearly missed by their children Cameron, Corey, Amy and Jeff. Cherished sister of Betty and the late Wayne. Nancy will be fondly remembered by her extended family and friends.

Nancy was an angel to all who knew her, she is now in heaven with her sparkling eyes and wonderful smile. Nancy and her late husband Jim formerly resided in Minden for over 20 years, creating great memories and friendships along the way. Nancy was loved and adored by many great friends and family. Nancy's true passion in life was her animals. She is now on the other side, happily reunited with her beloved fur babies.

A Celebration of Life will be held in the summer, date and time to be determined.

In lieu of flowers, memorial donations to the Alliston and District Humane Society would be appreciated.

In Loving Memory of

Bradley "Brad" Laurence Dale McKnight

Passed away peacefully at the Haliburton Hospital on Friday, February 20, 2026 with his loving family by his side, at the age of 81.

Devoted husband of Shirley (nee Ruttle) for almost 60 years. Dear father of Chantelle Moffatt (Ken Elshaw). Loving grandfather of Joshua and Paige Moffat. Survived by his sister Vera Kernohan (the late John), sister-in-law Linda Kellett and predeceased by sisters Ruth Stamp (Morris), Lois Nesbitt (Chesel) and by brothers Lyle McKnight and Gary McKnight (Darlene). Lovingly remembered by many nieces, nephews, family and friends.

Many describe Bradley as larger than life. He approached life with laughter and a smile and always having a kind word to say. His friends and family will remember him fondly as a fierce euchre player who wouldn't let anyone get away with playing the wrong card. He loved to dance and in the early years of their marriage, he and wife Shirley would be out dancing the night away every weekend. When called upon, Bradley would always lend a hand or a bottle to a task or party. He was an avid reader and was the most loyal friend anyone could have.

His family would like to thank all the staff at Haliburton Hospital for the excellent care and support they provided in Bradley's last days.

In keeping with Brad's wishes, there will be no funeral and cremation has taken place. A Celebration of Life will be held at a later date and will be announced.

Memorial Donations to the Haliburton Highlands Health Services Foundation (HHHSF) would be appreciated by the family and can be arranged through the Gordon A. Monk Funeral Home Ltd., P.O. Box 427, Minden, Ontario K0M 2K0.

www.gordonmonkfuneralhome.com

In Loving Memory of

Sharon Stoughton-Craig

It is with profound sadness the family announces the peaceful passing of Sharon Stoughton-Craig at the young age of 82, of Gooderham, Ontario.

Beloved wife of Ken Craig and daughter of the late Clifford and Myria Stoughton, sister of Wayne, Joan and Boyd. Mother of son Michael Hunter (deceased) and daughter Shelly Hunter. Sharon will be greatly missed by her nieces, nephews, grandchildren, great grandchildren and the community at large.

As per Sharon's request, there will be no Memorial Service or Celebration of Life. Cremation has taken place.

In lieu of flowers, for those who wish to donate in Sharon's memory, donations can be made to the Haliburton Highlands Health Services Foundation (HHHSF) or to Myositis Canada (Inclusive Body Myositis) and can be arranged through the Gordon A. Monk Funeral Home Ltd., P.O. Box 427, Minden, Ontario K0M 2K0.

A special thanks to Shannon Hunter for her unwavering love and support. The family also wishes to thank all the staff at Haliburton Highlands Health Services for their quality care and dedication.

www.gordonmonkfuneralhome.com

In Loving Memory of

Beryl Beatrice Murison (formerly Rasmus, nee Raymond)

It is with both heavy hearts and joy for a life well-lived that we announce Beryl's passing on February 19,2026 at Haliburton Hospital.

Beryl was preceded in death by her mother Iris (Neville) and father, Lincoln, husband Richard, and sons Keith and Kurt. Beryl is survived by her husband Brian, her son Kevin (Lynda), daughter-in-law Cara, grandchildren Laurel (Pieter), Kyle (Caitlin), Anna, Willow, Dylan, nephew Roderick (Keiko), and grand-niece Hannah, also by Brian's children Scott, Jennifer (Justin), grandchildren Emma, Ella and nephew Rick (Val) Remembered by family and friends in South Africa, Australia, Scarborough, Toronto, and Haliburton.

Born and raised in Cape Town, South Africa, Beryl immigrated to Scarborough, Ontario with Richard in February 1968. In her Scarborough years, working as hairstylist, mom to three boys, and close to her mother who followed her to Scarborough, Beryl's life was filled with activity, conversation, laughter and love. She ensured the family's home had a revolving front door allowing friends, neighbors and family in for babysitting, haircuts, lunches, laundry, sports practice and holiday dinners. Everyone was welcomed. Beryl camped and cottaged on Lake Kashagawigamog with family and friends from the mid-1970s until retiring to Haliburton in 1996. In Haliburton, Beryl was an active community member, avid golfer and curler and enthusiastic volunteer with the Haliburton Curling Club. Beryl also volunteered at Extendicare-Haliburton where her mother resided in her final years and at the Haliburton Hospital Auxiliary gift shop.

Beryl and Brian married in 2015 and together they continued to enjoy golfing, curling, and vacationing with friends in Hilton Head and the Dominican Republic during Haliburton winters. Beryl was loved dearly and is greatly missed.

As per Beryl's wishes, cremation has taken place and no services will be held.

A donation in her memory to the Haliburton Highlands Health Services Foundation or a charity of your choice would be appreciated and can be arranged through the Gordon A. Monk Funeral Home Ltd., P.O. Box 427, Minden, Ontario K0M 2K0.

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THE HALIBURTON COUNTY
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Spending cuts not likely to be deep at board of education

by PETER DOWNS
Staff Reporter

Haliburton school trustees have to shave just .5 per cent from their draft budget to give the province what it wants — no tax hike for the board's final year in power.

As Queen's Park prepares to chop the number of school boards in half and take over education funding, Education Minister John Snobelen has very clearly directed boards not to bump up their levies.

The board has also been told unofficially to expect the same level of provincial funding this year as it received in 1996.

That means Haliburton trustees will have to trim the board's preliminary budget of $17.32-million by about $88,000, or half a per cent, to bring it down to last year's spending level of $17.23-million.

"Basically, we're on a holding pattern right now," said the board's business administrator, Jim Bradley.

Unlike last year, parents and students shouldn't see any dramatic changes because of board cost-cutting measures for the year ahead.

The preliminary budget indicates estimated spending based on existing demands and includes funding requests from each school for capital expenditures and maintenance.

Trustees will likely look to those funding requests to find the small savings they need to come up with a zero increase in their final budget.

But until it gets official word from the province that its transfer payments will be held at the same level, the board doesn't plan on making any cuts.

"We've only been told these things. We haven't received anything in writing. So we're going sit and wait right now until we see what our grant structure is and go from there," Bradley said.

Since this is the last time trustees will have control over how money is spent on education in Haliburton County, this is "probably our most important budget," said chairwoman Cheryl Murdoch.

Before the board is dismantled, she said it's important that trustees do all they can with the resources they have to put the school system in the best position possible before it is merged with the boards of Muskoka and Victoria County.

But Dysart trustee Len Salvatori noted the board has little room to make any significant changes.

"This year we can't really commit to anything. We can't go above zero (per cent expenditure increase)," he said. "...

See PROVINCE page 4

The C word:

County council reacts angrily to Snowdon's threat to call in the Commissioner

by MARTHA PERKINS
Editor

Snowdon Reeve George Simmons was strongly chastized by fellow county councillors for suggesting that his municipality may call in a provincial commissioner to overall the local political structure.

"It's too premature to talk about bringing anyone in," said Warden Murray Fearrey. The county and its 10 municipalities have started a process of re-organizing themselves from within, and Simmons hasn't given this process a chance to succeed, he said.

See COUNTY page 6

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HOLD ON: There were screams and laughter as family enjoyed all the winter fun at Camp Wanakita on Sunday. Tobogganning down Cardiac Hill was as popular as ever.

Barber report gets good marks from county council

by MARTHA PERKINS
Editor

County councillors gave their unanimous approval to adopt David Barber's draft report on spending efficiencies.

Municipal councils still have two weeks to comment on the report before it's accepted in its final form, but the general reaction at Wednesday's county council meeting was positive. There are questions about some of those figures, but consultant David Barber will resolve many of the problems in his final report due after the March 3 deadline for comments.

Warden Murray Fearrey was the most outspoken defender of the report, which sets benchmarks for per household spending on various municipal services in the county.

"This is an action plan (and I want county council) to accept it in principle and seriously look at making it work," he said in what was at times an angry response to criticism of the report. "The numbers may never be perfect but they indicate trends to work towards. Let's put personalities aside and get this resolved."

Fearrey also made a dig at municipal employees, primarily roads superintendents, who have disagreed with some of Barber's figures and calculations. "I don't think staff has the will (to implement) this, but they must work with the councils" and councils must take a leadership role.

The Barber report compares spending levels in each municipality and calculates a per household cost of services. Barber sets a spending level slightly higher than the lowest cost for each service as benchmarks for municipalities to strive towards.

In the current edition of Municipal World magazine, there's a three-page article on amalgamation. The author says amalgamation has never saved money and had favourable comments about using benchmarks.

Addressing council on Wednesday, Barber said many other counties have expressed interest in his study and asked for copies of the report, leading Cardiff Deputy-reeve Doug Holman to joke that if Barber gets more business because of

See COUNTY page 10

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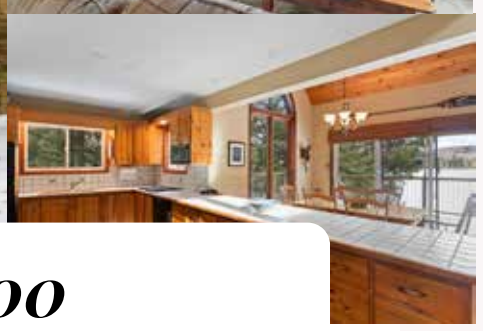

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